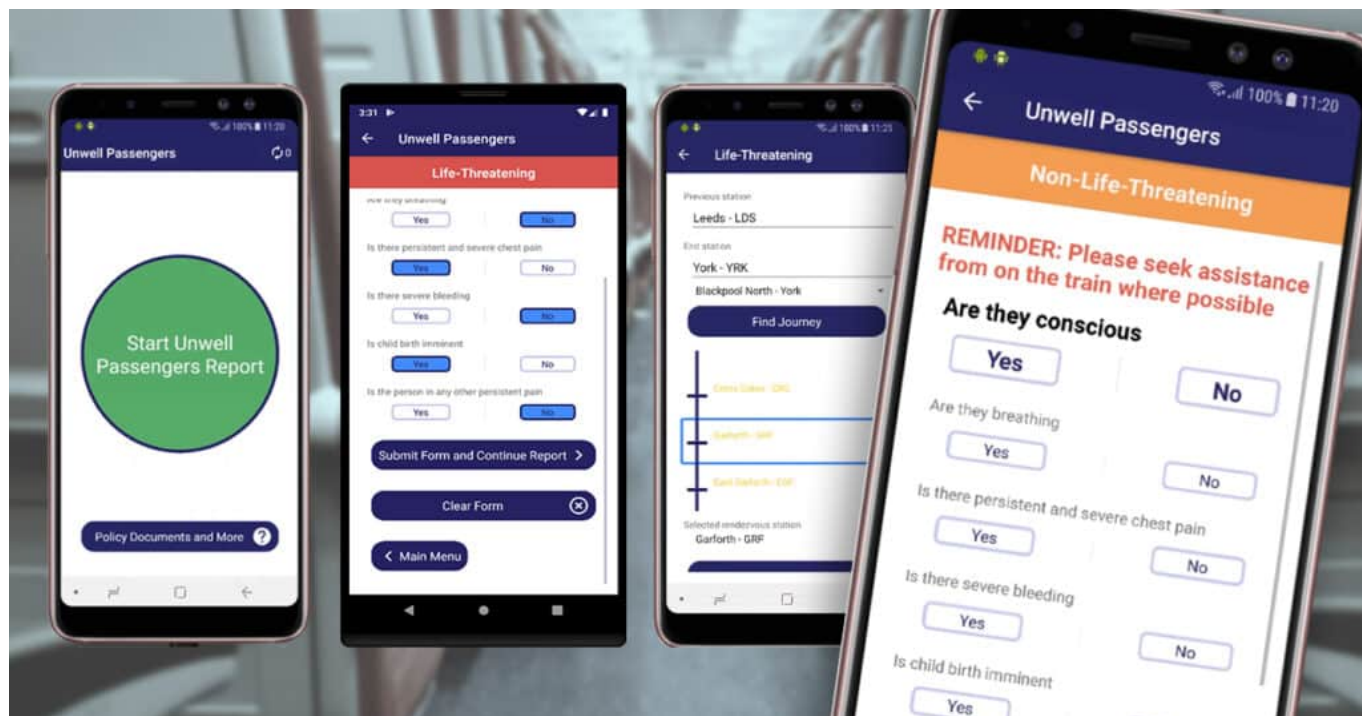# Northern tests new app to support staff caring for unwell passengers

February 10, 2021

Northern is trialling a new innovative app that will help customers get speedier care if they become ill on board any of the rail operators' trains.

The Unwell Passenger app, developed by York-based rail technology specialists, Incremental Solutions, gives step-by-step instructions to support staff on trains to help passengers who become ill or are injured.

Currently in the first phase of testing, the app uses mobile technology (GSM) for communication, satellite technology for position accuracy and a digital interface which allows colleagues, control teams and operational staff to simultaneously liaise with each other and if required, the emergency services.

Tricia Williams, Chief Operating Officer at Northern, said: "When a customer is unwell on one of our trains, the on-board member of staff currently has to remember, in a stressful situation, all the policies and procedures that relate to helping the customer, as well as coordinate with colleagues in control and emergency services.

"The app will mean improved management of incidents on board trains as customers who become unwell can be transported more quickly to a suitable location to receive the best care.

"Other customers also benefit from issues being resolved more quickly, meaning journeys will be back on track in less time."

Daniel Lee-Bursnall, Co-Founder and Commercial Director at Incremental Solutions, added: "Technology gives us so many opportunities to improve the customer experience on our rail networks, and in this instance, can really help people with immediate and unexpected needs. By digitizing the alert and subsequent care process for unwell passengers, we can become much more effective and proactive too."

The £300,000 trial was funded by Innovate UK and will be developed further to provide even more benefits for Northern customers

A second phase will look at automating the app further – including tracking which train the user is on, as well as the exact location of the train on Northern's network which will make it easier for emergency services to attend to a passenger. Additionally, it will be integrated with the train's communications – meaning the customer information system can updated with delays or other messages.

Photo credit: Northern